
Los Alamos National Laboratory sponsors 19th annual Hazmat Challenge

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Competition tests skills of hazardous materials response teams from three states

Editor's Note: News media representatives interested in attending the Hazmat Challenge can contact the Laboratory's Communications Office at (505) 667-7000 to coordinate travel to the site.

LOS ALAMOS, N.M., July 23, 2015—Twelve hazardous materials response teams from New Mexico, Missouri and Nebraska test their skills in a series of graded, timed exercises at the 19th annual Hazmat Challenge July 27-31 at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

“The challenge provides hazardous materials responders the opportunity to test their skills, share best practices with other response agencies, and learn new techniques through realistic hazardous materials release scenarios in a safe, non-hazardous environment,” said Chris Rittner of the Laboratory’s Security and Emergency Operations Division.

Held at Los Alamos’ Technical Areas 16 and 49, the event requires participants to respond to simulated hazardous materials emergencies involving an aircraft, clandestine laboratories, various modes of transportation, industrial piping scenarios, a simulated radiological release and a confined space event. The finale of the Hazmat Challenge is a skills-based obstacle course; teams are graded and earn points based on their ability to perform response skills through a 10-station obstacle course while using fully encapsulating personal protective equipment.

The Laboratory began the Hazmat Challenge in 1996 as a way to hone the skills of its own hazmat team members. The event now offers a training opportunity in a competitive format that is open to all hazardous materials response teams in New Mexico and across the nation. The winning team receives a “traveling trophy” and top scoring teams in the technical and overall categories are awarded permanent trophies. Funding for New Mexico teams is provided through federal grants via the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (NMDHSEM).

A video about the 2008 Hazmat challenge is on the Laboratory’s [YouTube channel](#).

For more information on this year’s challenge, contact [Chris Rittner](#) or [Carmela Rodriguez](#) by email.

Los Alamos National Laboratory

www.lanl.gov

(505) 667-7000

Los Alamos, NM

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